

Kealakehe High School

74-5000 Puohulihuli Street, Kailua Kona, HI 96740 - (808) 327-4300

<http://khsweaveriders.org>

Asking Better Questions

It is obvious enough that asking better questions leads to better answers. A better or more insightful question not only uncovers information and facts but also reveals values, behaviors, feelings, opinions and experiences.

Start Simple and Small

Begin by making sure the interviewee is comfortable and not-distracted. Pointing a camcorder and asking questions can be disarming, so prepare by setting up the shot and asking if the interviewee is comfortable and ready. Explain the format, purpose and length of the interview to give the interviewee a point of reference.

- Are you comfortable?
- Are you ready to start?
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Just the Facts Ma'am

Start with questions that encourage the interviewee to share their objective understanding or knowledge of the facts. Avoid asking a barrage of questions that will exhaust your subject; this is not an interrogation.

- How many years have you been a student at Kealakehe High School?
- How many years have you lived on the west side?
- What interested you about Kealakehe High School?

So, Tell me About Yourself

This is an opportunity for your interviewee to tell a story, to talk story, about possibly their favorite topic...themselves.

- Tell me about a recent school activity and how you participated.
- Tell me about a memorable school assignment and how you performed.
- Walk me through a typical Kealakehe school day.

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Feelings, Opinions and Beliefs

This is the heart of the matter, where interviewees share what they think, feel and believe. Ask questions in an open-ended, neutral and respectful manner.

- What did you feel about the school activity?
- What did you like the most (least) about the assignment?
- What do you believe is the most important part of the school day?

I'm King of the World

These questions ask the interviewee to ponder and dream about the future and offer creative and hypothetical responses to the past.

- If you were to relive your high school career, what would be different or the same?
- Describe what would be the perfect class (assignment)?
- If you were principal of Kealakehe, what would you do differently for the freshman class?

Follow Up and Check For Understanding

Be engaged in your interview, encourage responses and listen to the interviewee. Remember the truth is out there!

- Can you be more specific?
- Then what happened?
- Is this what you mean?

Some More Tips

Don't come to the interview with an agenda or something to prove. Leave your assumptions behind and let the interviewee answer for themselves. Ask open-ended questions that are neutral and non-judgmental. Do not be aggressive and argumentative, it will merely cause your interviewee to be defensive and argumentative. Where do you go from there?

Try not to beat a dead horse as it is uncomfortable for everyone involved. If a subject or topic is covered, then move on by providing a transition or bridge to the next idea. Don't lose control, keep it moving.

- We've been talking about this topic, now I'd like to move on to ...